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ABSTRACT

More than 1,500 educators at the National Adult Education Conference probed issues ranging from competency-based teaching, through the lifelong growth of adult educators themselves, to national concerns which gave the conference its "5E" theme: employment, ethics, education, environment, and energy. Presentations given at the conference focused on (1) who is responsible for adult basic education; (2) a national policy for adult education; (3) the coming decade of adult education; (4) opportunities for adult educators; (5) competency-based adult education; (6) industrial training opportunities; (7) recruitment and development of volunteers; (8) learning resources; (9) adult education in international perspective, adult education in the armed services, and working with the aging; (10) equality for women; and (11) education for global citizenship and bioethics. (LRA)

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A Focus on Responsibility

Adult Educators Confront America's Future

An interpretative report of the National Adult Education Conference of the National Association for Public Continuing and Adult Education (NAPCAE) and the Adult Education Association of the U.S.A. (AEA/USA), held in Portland, Oregon, October 25-29, 1978

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Future Directions for a Learning Society

The College Board

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

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A Focus on Responsibility: Adult Educators Confront America's Future

By Ronald Gross and Samuel C. Brightman

The next decade is yours. The Eighties will be an educational decade for adult educators.

Dan Evans

With these words adult and continuing educators were welcomed to their 27th annual conference — and to a dawning decade of challenge.

The Portland conference was a celebration of that challenge, as well as a sobering analysis of its dimensions. More than 1500 conferees probed issues ranging from competency-based teaching, through the lifelong growth of adult educators themselves, to the national concerns which gave the conference its "5 E" theme: Employment, Ethics, Education, Environment, and Energy.

Employment was a central concern throughout the conference, from "Age Stereotypes and the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1978" through sessions on vocational, technical and career education.

Ethics was the focus of various sessions devoted to the responsibilities of adult educators, including "Volunteer Tutors and Adult Non-Readers: The Ethics of Teaching Adults to Read," "Enablement — The Responsibility of the Church," and "Assessing Reading Levels, Readability of Instructional Material, and Kohlberg's Moral Development Program in Adult Education."

Education, of course, informed virtually every session, in its manifold variety as it serves adults. English as a second language, community education, continuing education, adult basic education, collaboration and cooperation in education planning, education for aging, needs of women, adult literacy, nontraditional learners, community colleges, competency-based learning, lifelong learning, preparing to be an adult educator, international adult education, volunteer resources in education.

Environment and *Energy* seemed to form a natural alliance, with *Education* the way to ensure proper attention to both. These topics, broached in the opening all-conference session on "The Responsibility of Government for Education, Energy and Environment," carried through to the closing session on "Energy Policy and Environmental Education: Bioethical Priorities."

Throughout, the focus was on *people* — adult learners as people, adult educators as people. Gleaming through presentation after presentation were people's hopes for better and richer lives — hopes helped by adult learning opportunities:

- Choctaw Indians in Missippi learn life-coping skills from paraprofessionals who teach in their native language.
- Businessmen and midlife women in Oregon redesign their lives at a former liberal arts college which has transformed itself into an institution specifically geared to the adult learner's needs.
- Fourth-generation illiterates in the Applachian "hollows" are reached by "trusted others" trained to help them.
- Servicemen leave the armed forces after several years of active duty with skills qualifying them for high-level technical positions with major corporations.
- Vietnamese immigrants in Pennsylvania, who have already completed courses in English-as-a-second-language and Adult Basic Education (ABE) leading to a high school diploma, enroll in technical training programs leading to licensure and employment — with the option of continuing their education at a community college and then a university.
- Independent learners throughout the country earn credit for what they have learned on their own through college-level exams accepted for credit at hundreds of institutions.
- "Displaced homemakers" — women confronted with making a living due to divorce or widowhood — are prepared and placed in nontraditional jobs in New York State.

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Important ideas that will dominate professional thinking in and about the role of adult education in the years ahead were posed and discussed:

- Should the U.S. have a comprehensive policy for adult education?
- What new roles should be developed for women as practitioners and as clients of adult education?
- What impact will adult educators feel from the burgeoning competency-based education movement?
- How can leadership for the future be developed among today's adult educators?

The participants came from the public schools, from colleges and universities, from government agencies (including a large contingent from the armed forces), from business and industry, from voluntary, religious, and arts organizations, from museums, libraries, and agricultural extension. They were teachers, administrators, counselors, field agents, media specialists, students. The participants' respect for each other, and for individual differences, was signaled by the fact that the program was available in braille, major sessions were provided in tape cassette form, and key speeches were "signed" for the deaf.

This report can present only a sliver of the important, exciting, significant ideas presented at the 200-odd conference sessions. It cannot deal with the numerous committee and business meetings, workshops, task forces, and other convenings so necessary to the smooth functioning and continued advancement of the profession and of the two sponsoring associations. Those outcomes will be reported through the usual organizational channels and in other AEA and NAPCAE publications. Here, we focus on the substantive presentations which participants at Portland seemed to find most important, useful, and enjoyable.

Whose Responsibility

The conference opened with a stirring challenge from Representative John Buchanan of Alabama, ranking Republican on the House Labor and Education Committee and a key figure in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. "The challenge for our nation's third century," he said, "is to make America become for all its citizens what it has been for most of them — a place of unlimited opportunity."

Emphasizing that "our most important resources are our human resources," he said that "education must provide everyone with the opportunity to grow throughout his life, and add to the quality of life of all of our citizens."

Buchanan cited statistics showing gains since the first federal funding of Adult Basic Education, but also cited the Northcutt study revealing that one out of five adults still lack the basic skills necessary to function as a citizen.

"Where we are is a long way from where we need to go," he said. "Whose responsibility is this?"

The federal government, state government, and post-secondary institutions all have roles to play, Buchanan said, but he concluded: "Finally, the responsibility rests squarely on your shoulders. You are on the firing line. The fate of millions of adults depends upon your dedication and your skills. This is important not only to individuals but also to the nation, for the whole can only be as strong as the sum of its parts. It is in your hands to see that the promises and high goals (of the new legislation) become a reality in this world."

A National Policy for Adult Education?

But what, precisely, should be the federal posture toward adult learning and lifelong education? Interestingly, it was a visitor from abroad who made the most dramatic proposal here. Portland 1978 may be remembered as the occasion on which this issue — Should the U.S. develop and implement a comprehensive national policy for providing adult learning opportunities? — was placed forcefully on the profession's agenda.

"Rhetoric has outrun reality in adult education," said John Lowe of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (Paris), who is currently engaged in a review of U.S. education policies for the disadvantaged. "Now we must face up to whether or not we mean what we have been saying, and have the

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will to create positive comprehensive plans and implement them.

"Western democratic governments have four options in their attitude toward adult education. The first, which dominated everywhere until the last ten years, is to leave it alone, not take any special action on behalf of adult learners. The second is to grant more money to existing adult education agencies, which usually supports those that are the most bothersome. The third is to recognize that there are gaps — needs that are not being met, impeding national priorities — and tackle them. The fourth is to really plan comprehensively, on the same basis as is done for the mainstream educational enterprise. Most countries are now somewhere between stages two and three, some are in three; one hopes some will soon move into the fourth stage.

"The general state of adult education in the 'advanced' Western nations is poor — despite official endorsement of lifelong learning. Typically, adult education is underfinanced, does not involve the severely deprived who need it most, and is not integrated into the mainstream of the educational system. It lives hand-to-mouth — the very opposite of comprehensive planning. Only in some of the 'developing' countries is adult education really seen as part of a national strategy for social and economic development."

Lowe strongly urged serious thinking about what comprehensive national planning of learning opportunities would mean. "The first requirement of such comprehensive planning would be for policymakers to understand what is meant by a broad, sophisticated concept of learning opportunities," he argued. "At present, most politicians think of adult education merely in terms of whatever form of it they have been exposed to in the past. Most laymen think it means remedial instruction — for those who didn't get it the first time 'round.

"The second great task in beginning to think comprehensively about a national policy is to identify unmet needs. No nation could afford to do everything that one might do in adult education. Priorities must be set, and for most countries those priorities at present focus, and probably should, on the disadvantaged."

Lowe urged specific measures in implementing a comprehensive lifelong learning system, stressing the need for large-scale applied research and development programs directly addressing major problems that need new solutions, and an "elaborate and well-serviced guidance counseling system of a magnitude that would demand government sponsorship."

The U.S., with its mixed, pluralistic adult education enterprise, has the makings of a healthy balance between centralization and decentralization, Lowe believes. But, at present, the system is still too *ad hoc*, haphazard, uncoordinated, and piecemeal. "Someone at the center needs to get a grip on the whole picture, see where the gaps are, support what's there and encourage new initiatives where needed," he urged.

Responding to Lowe's analysis, Paul Delker, Director of the Division of Adult Education of the Office of Education, and others pointed out that recent legislation — the Lifelong Learning Act and the new education amendments about to become law — provide the best opportunity to support the ongoing system while identifying gaps and working to fill them. "The Mondale Act made it our national goal to provide opportunities for learning," Delker noted. "The only problem is that no funds have been appropriated in the two years since it passed. Now, we have the opportunity to integrate 'Mondale' with the top priority for the disadvantaged which is the thrust of the new legislation."

A Coming "Decade of Adult Education"

The need for a national focus on adult learning will be reinforced, according to Dan Evans, ex-Governor of Washington and president of Evergreen State College, by that most potent of all social forces — demography.

"During the 50s, we spent most of our national educational budget on the elementary schools, to educate the post-World War II babies, most of it on secondary schools in the 60s, and most of it on higher education in the 70s," Evans said. "The 80s are most likely to be a decade of Continuing and Adult Education — simply because, demographically, that's where the people

"Let's put policymaking in the hands of adult learners themselves," said Warren Ziegler. "The first principle should be that policy is formulated only by people who will be affected by those policies."

will be. Among the vast bulge in the population of people in midlife and older, there are millions seeking career change; millions who failed to get adequate schooling when they were youngsters; millions who are simply awakening to the joy of learning.

"This must compel the government's attention. But I hope that these new responsibilities will be fulfilled without a continuation of the centralization and proliferation of government control, that in part accounts for the Proposition 13 reaction. We've seen a generation of centralization in all social services in this country, though education has fortunately retained its essentially regional and local character. Our government must learn to trust the people; to trust the officials at the state and local levels; to trust leaders like yourselves; indeed, to trust citizens themselves. We need a renaissance of involvement, participation, and decentralization."

From within the profession came advocacy of even greater decentralization and participation. Warren Ziegler, widely known for his work in "civic literacy and futures invention," presented the case for giving "power to the people" in adult education planning. "Let's put policymaking in the hands of adult learners themselves," urged Ziegler. "The first principle should be that policy is formulated only by people who will be affected by those policies. The corollary to this is that persons whould not make policy who are unaffected by it. Applying both of these participatory propositions would bring about a radical change in most policies in the United States . . . and, I believe, for the better."

Dimensions of the Learning Society

- 60,000,000 enrollments in formal instructional settings, 46,000,000 of them outside of the school and college systems.
- 40,000,000 Americans currently in career transition.
- $17,500,000,000 in educational benefits currently in force, of which only a pittance is used.
- $10,000,000,000 spent yearly on training in business and industry.
- 65,000,000 Americans lack basic competency skills.
- 15,000,000 Americans lack college degrees.
- 12,000,000 professionals require regular in-service education.

This tangible documentation of opportunities for adult educators in the emerging learning society, presented by Rexford G. Moon, Jr., of Future Directions for a Learning Society (FDLS), evoked strong response from the conferees. "The range of new opportunities and resources to work with is astonishing," said one veteran observer of the adult education scene. "This shows that a 'decade of adult education' may indeed be dawning."

Over 300 conferees expressed interest in specific FDLS initiatives to help adult educators make maximum use of these and other opportunities, including a national Delphi-type study currently underway on how leaders in key sectors of American society view adult learning needs, and the first national newspaper for adult learners. Mr. Moon announced that the College Board and Harvard University were jointly establishing a National Institute for the Management of Lifelong Learning in Postsecondary Education, developed under Sears-Roebuck Foundation support, to begin with regional convenings around the country in the Spring followed by the first full-fledged session in Cambridge this summer.

"CBAE" — Blessing or Juggernaut?

Some thirty-five states currently mandate competency-based education. And, while the pressure now is chiefly on secondary school educators to ensure basic competency for high school graduates, the prevailing view at Portland was that adult educators will soon be similarly effected.

Government concern was galvanized by the Adult Performance Level Study (APL) which revealed that 20 percent of American adults do not have the skills to function competently in society, and 34 percent are only marginally competent. "We have come to the conviction that many adults are not functionally competent to cope with the challenges of everyday living," said James

"Competency-based education ranks as one of the most misused and misapplied concepts in American education today," charged William G. Spady of the National Institute of Education. The CBE "bandwagon" may be "this century's major non-event in public education."

Parker, Education Program Specialist, Division of Adult Education, Office of Education. But he added that the situation could be remedied, and that adult educators were gaining the wherewithal to do the job. Shared expertise is being rapidly developed through conferences throughout the country, useful and potent materials are being published, pilot projects are cranking up, and federal and state funding is more available.

"In fiscal 1978, 43 states reported 159 projects entailing $8 million in federal, state and local funds," Parker reported. "Seventy-five percent of 42 new state plans that we have examined emphasize functional competence in their statements of goals; and the new adult education legislation about to go into effect, which will shape federal activities over the next six years, also stresses 'skills necessary to function in our society.'"

To assess what has been accomplished so far in this area, Joan Fischer, Acting Associate Dean of Community Services, Worcester State College, Massachusetts, reviewed CBAE research and activities for the Office of Education's Division of Adult Education. She concluded that "CBAE instruction is helping people, and motivating students. . . . Model programs, both those that lead to certification and those that don't, have been developed and appear to be working well. More and more materials are being produced."

She also noted the impact on adult educators themselves: "Program staffs are enthusiastic about the possibilities of functional competency instruction, especially after that instruction has been implemented. There are frustrations — knowing what to teach and how to teach it is one." Professor Fischer cited other problems, but it was left to another speaker to deliver the sharpest critique of current practice.

"Competency-based education ranks as one of the most misused and misapplied concepts in American education today," charged William G. Spady of the National Institute of Education. The CBE "bandwagon" may be "this century's major non-event in public education," he said.

"In all but a few cases," Spady contended, "what has come to be called CBE is no more than testing and remediation programs focused on basic literacy and mathematical skills. It misses the point in terms of the meaning and importance of "*competency*" in life-role activities, what it means to "*base*" a program on competencies, and in what respects the term "*education*" extends beyond the boundaries of student certification alone.

"In a CBE program, major activities and operations are organized around student accomplishment and demonstration of skills and outcomes, rather than around time. Goals and objectives are the driving forces, and they supersede the clock, the schedule, and the calendar as the primary basis for guiding instruction, administering assessment, and determining student progress and promotion through the instructional program. Time is therefore used in more flexible ways; students are given multiple opportunities and methods for reaching given performance levels; and standards, record-keeping, reporting, and credit are based on explicit goals reached rather than on vague criteria and labels.

"In short, CBE, if adequately understood and flexibly applied, *could be* an exciting and valuable concept. But in order to be so, educators, policymakers and the public will have to be willing to entertain some substantial departures from traditional educational assumptions and practices."

Adult educators, however, *already* "entertain some substantial departures from traditional educational assumptions and practices," as three practitioners pointed out in commenting on the Spady speech. "We do *not* subscribe to many of the myths and habits of secondary education," said one, citing the flexible scheduling and individualized progress characteristic of most ABE programs. "In the GED, we have always had a standard outside of the classroom and outside of the teacher's control," she added. Another experienced practitioner said: "We adult educators are in an ideal position to capitalize on a trend toward competency-based education because we have the freedom and flexibility to change, to meet the new standards — which secondary schools and teachers find it much harder to do."

"GM has a training budget of approximately one billion," said Leo F. Johnson of Babson College," and that's just *one* of the large Fortune 500 companies. This is a market we adult educators should look at."

A third said: "We are already largely competency-based because our students have typically been out in life and know their deficiencies. We all know the students who come in and say: 'I've got my high school diploma — but I don't know enough to get a job.' That's a grand point to start from! Also, our programs are already individualized, and good new materials that weren't available when most of us started in this work have now come on the market. So we've got three great advantages in moving with this educational tide."

One veteran state adult education director summed up widespread reactions: "We're more likely to achieve the success we seek by moving with this trend, than by maintaining the old ways. Just raising a person's reading ability to the 4th grade level isn't enough to make him or her functional in our society. We must focus on making the goals of adult education — indeed, of all education — the strengthening of the learner's capacity to function in our society."

Billion Dollar Markets

Business and industry have a long tradition of competency-based adult education, and the conferees showed a keen interest in opportunities there. "GM has a training budget of approximately one billion," said Leo F. Johnson of Babson College, "and that's just *one* of the large Fortune 500 companies. This is a market we adult educators should look at."

John Purcell, Training Specialist at the Bonneville Power Administration, and Lester W. Jenkins, Manager of Personnel Development for Omark Industries, discussed these issues. Purcell predicted that industrial training will get much bigger in the future. He said it was not uncommon, even now, for many firms to spend 5 percent of their payroll costs on employee training, not including the cost of employee time. There will be a need in the future for retraining in particular occupational areas. Industrial training is placing increased emphasis on such areas as career development, life planning, human resource development, pre-retirement planning, and affirmative action. Purcell called for better training instruments, and better linkages between adult educators and industrial trainers. But he also expressed concern about the morale of employees who, in a steady state economy, take educational offerings, get a degree, then fail to be promoted. This issue may be a tough one in upcoming years, he predicted.

Jenkins introduced himself as the typical "one-person training staff," and cited three major areas where adult educators could help in training for a firm such as Omark: finance, communications, and leadership development. Many first-level managers have little knowledge in the fields of economics and finance, and many are unable to express themselves well, either verbally or in writing.

But adult educators who want to become industrial trainers may have to change techniques. The panelists complained about faculty who came in and gave canned lectures, not bothering to consider a company's particular training needs. The panelists felt community colleges in the Portland area had been particularly effective in meeting the training needs of local industry. Purcell said Bonneville is more likely to bring in specialized consultants to meet its training needs than to send employees to outside training sessions, but Jenkins said he might use such programs to meet a specific training need.

How do training directors in industry choose consultants? The panelists reported using three main methods. First, "the network" of other industrial trainers; second, proven seminar leaders (if some of their employees did go to an outside seminar or institute and spoke highly of its leaders, the company might hire them as consultants); third, consulting firms (a number of local consulting firms have adult educators affiliated with them). In some areas, adult educators themselves have formed consulting firms to meet industrial training needs.

The future for adult educators in the field of industrial training appears bright, and the session demonstrated real interest on both sides for better linkages.

Volunteers — Their Use and Abuse

Increasing interest in volunteerism has been generated by new federal legislation inviting use of nonprofit

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organizations to deliver educational services, and by the growth of adult learning centers and in-home tutorial programs which use one-on-one instruction.

Paula Menkin of the University of Southern California, moderated a major session centered around recruitment, development of volunteers, cooperation between paid staff and volunteers, and evaluation of volunteer performance. Paul Ilsley of Northern Illinois University pointed out that the new tax law would allow deductions for time donated to organizations as a volunteer, but added that the IRS had not decided yet on regulations for this new option.

Some guidelines for the successful use of volunteers were offered by Mr. Ilsley: understand their motives and skills, provide the resources they need, offer training that is relevant, provide opportunities for professional growth, offer a ladder of success, and name a skillful coordinator.

Bobbie Walden described a project she directed at Huntsville, Alabama, which relied heavily on volunteers to recruit and teach students. She stressed the need for careful job description, training, supervision and evaluation and noted that some volunteers on her project became paid workers.

Two Titans

Two of the most widely admired figures in modern American adult education shared a platform at Portland and offered a moving memoir, as well as some sage advice on the profession.

Professor Cyril Houle, currently Senior Program Consultant with the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, recalled the mid-1940s when he and fellow-speaker Malcolm Knowles operated the two major adult education programs in Chicago. To stimulate their own growth and that of their associates, they instituted a series of brown bag lunches to discuss the basic issues facing adult educators. Out of those seminars came two of the most influential books in the field: Knowles' *The Modern Practice of Adult Education* and Houle's *The Design of Education*. Professor Houle cited this as an example of how competence is best developed in a context of performance — where performance can provide the grist for theory. Responding to the emphasis on competency-based education at the conference, he insisted that "beyond competence lies performance — we must somehow get beyond demonstrating competence in an academic setting, to performance in the outside world." Professor Houle concluded: "A career in adult education calls for lifetime learning by *us*. We need a constant interplay between action and understanding."

Significantly, participants in the conference found a rich supply of new materials to help with this process in several sessions and in the "Swap Shop." Among them were the first correspondence courses to orient newcomers to the field, offered by Colorado State University. Conferees were also invited to earn in-service credit for their conference participation through a course devised by Professor Walter Shold of Portland State. Credits could be earned by preparing a graduate-quality paper on how to apply what was learned at the conference to improving performance back home. This nicely exemplified Professor Houle's point about the interaction of study and performance.

Professor Knowles presented his recent discoveries on self-directed learning at another session. "I've experienced several trends in Human Resource Development (meaning, all those activities aimed at the growth and development of people) over the past ten years, and especially over the last five," he said. "First, we've begun to define HRD differently. Increasingly, it's thought of *not* as a set of prescheduled, predetermined activities — the particular courses, seminars, institutes or workshops which an organization or profession provides for its members. More and more the organization is seen as a *system of learning resources*."

The question is what resources are available for the growth and development of individuals, Knowles said. Besides organized instructional activities, resources for learning include the entire supervisory and management cadre, the worker's peers, the worker's day-to-day activities, and the entire work environment. "The challenge then becomes to help individuals identify their learning needs and find ways and means to meet them," the speaker argued.

"I predict a ferment of innovations over the next decade — in new ways to enable individuals to make use of resources for learning, said Malcolm Knowles. "Specifically, I look forward to the development of *competency models* for the whole range of life roles."

"I predict a ferment of innovations over the next decade — in new ways to enable individuals to make use of resources for learning. Specifically, I look forward to the development of *competency models* for the whole range of life roles. We're just in the primitive stage of this in the occupational realm with 'life-work planning.' Eventually we will be able to sit down with a client and ask 'What do you want to become in the next stage of your development?' And then we will be able to provide models of competence in that area for them to work toward — models based on how others have successfully negotiated that kind of change.

"We will also develop a process by which learning needs can be diagnosed, giving learners a way to measure their present level of competence, and to experience in their gut the gap between where they are now and where they want to get. To my mind, experiencing this gap, in one's gut as it were, is the operational definition of motivation to learn, and the whole of our art is to get people to experience it.

"I also foresee further experimentation with new instructional forms for making learning resources widely available, such as Community Education, or Educational Brokering Centers."

Three Flourishing Fields

Not all the areas of creativity and enterprise in adult education can be covered in this report for lack of space, including, most notably: community college initiatives in "community education"; innovative approaches to the teaching of reading and of English as a second language; and fresh approaches in vocational, technical, and career education. Useful sessions for practitioners were available throughout the conference. But three fields were so strongly presented that they demand attention here.

Adult Education in International Perspective was the focus of six sessions. Participants were briefed on teaching about human rights by representatives of the U.S. National Commission for UNESCO, the Office of Education, the State Department, and the Department of H.E.W. There was a progress report on encouraging American responses to the UNESCO Lifelong Learning agreement, which had figured so prominently in last year's conference. Adult educators from Venezuela, New Zealand, Ethiopia, Australia, Thailand and other countries shared insights into their systems and problems. And, as described above, John Lowe of OECD applied international perspectives to the American scene.

Perhaps the most intriguing facet of these discussions was the new turn which seems to have been taken in these international dialogues of adult educators. Rather than talking about the best ways for the U.S. and other "developed" nations to aid the "underdeveloped" countries, the emphasis was on the commonality between problems in all countries and on the common barriers to progress whether in the southern mountains of Appalachia or the northern provinces of Thailand. Interestingly, many "underdeveloped" nations have already taken the major step in adult education which Lowe advocated for the U.S. They are planning, or at least thinking seriously about, adult education as an integral part of their nation's social, economic, and political advancement.

A second flourishing field well-represented at the conference was *Adult Education in the Armed Services*. Practitioners met continually at Portland, briefing members on new developments and discussing vital issues. Irving M. Greenberg, Deputy Assistant for Program Management in the Department of Defense, affirmed that "the Department of Defense is a community, and we must respond to the aspirations for self-development of our members."

But new methods will be required to do that, Dr. Sylvia Tucker pointed out. "The military gets many individuals who failed in the civilian educational system. It won't work to just try to teach them again with the same educational methods that they have already failed under."

Rosalind Loring, former AEA president, said that, at its best, adult education in the military was the prototype for adults who are continuing or resuming their education. "Those of us in civilian educational institutions need to keep in mind the large amount of education being done in the military," she said. "The

The theme voiced over and over again at the Conference is the potential source of talent that older persons represent, and the contribution they can make to their communities. Yet, here is a resource that we have not as yet fully tapped — the emeritus members of our own associations.

number of men and women helped in basic literacy skills is well known. Industry seeks veterans who have had military courses in electronics, radar, mechanics, health services, and other such vocational training. The high quality of the military schools is widely recognized, and many young people decide to enlist with just such opportunities in mind.

"We also need to keep in mind that military education, while generally intended to help the military person do his or her job while in service, has provided a person, who when discharged, has increased social value."

Working with the Aging also attracted significant attention. Dr. Barbara Chandler, Education Specialist in the Division of Adult Education of the U.S. Office of Education, saw a challenge for senior citizens: "They should use their talents to help solve social problems," she said. "Educators are too often bound by traditional educational ideas in this field, that prevent us from thinking creatively. We are prone to think of providing things *to* older people: instruction, credits, services. We're now beginning to think about what older people can contribute to society — to their families, their communities, and themselves."

While the discussions on how older persons can contribute to their community and to the younger generations continued, the NAPCAE Emeritus Committee was practicing what conference panelists were preaching. Helen G. Lynch, chairperson of this recently formed group of retired adult educators, expressed the feelings of her fellow emeritus members at a special symposium: "As retired persons, we want to be active and to support the younger people coming up in the profession."

What did these sessions, and particularly the Emeritus Committee meeting, add up to for those persons involved in lifelong learning? Sandra Timmermann, who monitored the deliberations closely for the Institute of Lifetime Learning of the National Retired Teachers Association and the American Association of Retired Persons, commented: "The theme voiced over and over again at the conference is the potential source of talent that older persons represent, and the contribution they can make to their communities. Yet, here is a resource that we have not as yet fully tapped — the emeritus members of our own associations. A goal for those of us involved in education for and about aging is to find a way to take advantage of the skills and talents of our senior statesmen — people who not only understand what adult education is all about, but also have the benefit of years of valuable life experience."

"What Happened to the Sixth 'E'?"

That question — posed by buttons and improvised posters which appeared early on in the Portland conference — inspired a series of sessions and activities on equity and equality for women, aimed at continuing the momentum generated by the National Women's Conference held in 1977 in Houston.

Progress since Houston was reported, with President Carter establishing an interdepartmental task force on women, a Senate bill to increase the allocation to the Women's Educational Equity Program to $80 million per year over the next three years, and other breakthroughs at the state and local levels. But unresolved issues remain, some of them particularly relevant to adult education.

Jeanne Lea of the University of the District of Columbia saw as a priority for the women's movement "establishing achievable goals and setting a timetable for their completion." Important issues of concern to adult educators should be sex-fair counseling, channeling women to nontraditional careers, and eliminating inequities in the criminal justice system, she said.

The issue of economics was raised by panelist Jane Berry: "The people for whose education we are responsible are not informed about what is going on. The climate is being modified by economic reality; learning to live with less will be the order of the day."

A special panel was assembled to deal with the question of "How Women are Facing the Issue of Equality in Business and Education." Consensus was that women have made progress in both areas, but a great deal more effort is needed at many levels. Olive Barton, Affirmative Action Officer of Louisiana Pacific Corporation, feels that affirmative action programs "must

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have the top priority of top administrators. It will work only when managers decide it is good business for them."

At Portland State University, 50 percent of the undergraduate and 52 percent of the graduate students are women. They come for a variety of reasons: seeking careers, seeking career change, or because they are displaced homemakers. "Because the level of education of women in Oregon is very high," said Celia Forbes, Vice President for Student Affairs at PSU, "we do not need quotas, but we do need positive targets."

Olive Barton summarized the discussion: "Women are just realizing now that they will be working for the rest of their lives, and they must have power within the system to mold that system."

An exhibit/fair on the Houston conference's resolutions featured tables dedicated to each one, with appropriate handouts, displays of materials, and experts ready to answer questions and lead small discussion groups. The exhibit, organized by Marcie Boucouvalas, was lauded by the International Women's Year office in Washington, D.C., as "the most elaborate coverage given to the plan to date."

A Final Question

The five "E"s of the conference — Employment, Ethics, Education, Environment, and Energy — were tied together at the final plenary session by Dr. Margaret Maxey, Professor of Bioethics at the University of Detroit.

Portraying a nation "stampeded by a small but very vocal and powerful minority of political activists who have not quite been candid about their agenda for social and political reform," the speaker contended that since Earth Day 1970, American public opinion and national legislation have been swept up in a misguided fervor to curtail high technology and adopt a "small is beautiful" ideology.

Such an ideology, she argued, could emerge only in the world's most advanced, privileged nation, and thrives most among that nation's best-off people. "We can commit ourselves to asceticism," she said, "because we have plenty of fat to trim off before we really start hurting. But the Black inner-city students I teach, let alone the Third and Fourth World peoples desperate for our technology and its benefits — *they* don't want to curtail 'high technology' just when they have their first chance to take advantage of it to improve their quality of life."

Scoring those environmentalists who take a Thoreauvian, "lifeboat ethic" or "coercive utopian" approach, Dr. Maxey called upon adult educators "to bring some balance, civility, and mutual respect into this debate over Environmental Education — education for global citizenship and bioethics." She said the most fundamental problem this nation has to deal with is how to recover and maintain "some scientific and historical perspective that will permit a balanced judgement about these alleged biohazards in our environment." Propagating a balanced perspective, she implied, was the great task facing adult education today.

It was the most direct and baffling challenge posed to the conferees, whether or not one agreed with the speaker's assessment of the environmental issue. For it showed that, in a culture riven with complex questions, adult educators themselves must confront intellectually the thorniest problems of value.

To strengthen them in that task, Dr. Maxey left her audience — and ended the conference — with a quotation from Marie Curie that might well serve as a motto for all adult and continuing education: "Nothing in life is to be feared. It is to be understood."

The Future Directions for a Learning Society (FDLS) program of the College Board in New York is a major effort toward the realization of a learning society in the United States. Funded by the Exxon Education Foundation, FDLS develops consensus and support for strategies, services, and policies that can best meet current and projected needs of participants and providers in a learning society. To this end, the program solicits and relies on the participation of professional people in the field, public policymakers, and the larger community. The program will produce projections of future trends, information about the needs of learners and providers of educational opportunities and resources, policy recommendations, and services. For more information, contact Rexford G. Moon, Jr., Managing Director, Future Directions for a Learning Society, The College Board, 888 Seventh Avenue, New York, New York 10019. Telephone: (212) 582-6210.